

College Student Success: A Primer

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Why all this interest in student success anyway?

- Recruitment is costly
- Students are our future
- Retention/student persistence is preferred over attrition
- Cognitive measures alone do not successfully predict student success
- Positive correlations between success in college and success beyond college

Issues related to the transition to postsecondary education

- The first year is not grade 13
- Cultural differences
- Behavior patterns set early
- Peers are a powerful influence

What we know about today's first-year college students

- Annual National Freshman Survey
- Generational studies
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, CCSSE, BSSE)
- Annual Beloit College Mindset List
- Campus-specific, system-specific, state-specific information

The retention/persistence connection

- Student/Institutional Fit
- Involvement/Community
- Academic and Social Integration
- Student Learning

Three paradigm shifts of interest

- From a focus on retention..... to a focus on student learning and success
- From a focus on cognitive measures alone..... to a consideration of emotional intelligence measures as well
- From isolated programmatic interventions..... to comprehensive approaches

Concerns with focusing on retention

- Defining retention
- Low expectation
- Faculty perceptions
- A by-product of effective institutional initiatives
- The role of institutional mission

Defining first-year student success (*Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005*)

- Academic and intellectual competence
- Interpersonal relationships
- Identity development
- Career and lifestyle
- Personal health and wellness
- Civic responsibility
- Faith/spirituality dimensions of life
- Diversity

Cognitive abilities and emotional intelligence and the student success puzzle

- Institutional admissions criteria *vs.* student success criteria
- IQ *vs.* EI
- Emotional intelligence - “The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.” – *Daniel Goleman*

Emerging research on emotional intelligence

- Grades earned (Schulman, 1995)
- Student retention (Schutte & Malouff, 2002)
- Academic success (Parker et al, 2005)

Emotional Intelligence Constructs (*R, Bar-On, EQ-i, MHS, Inc.*)

- Self-Regard
- Assertiveness
- Emotional Self-Awareness
- Independence
- Self-Actualization
- Empathy
- Social Responsibility
- Interpersonal Relationship
- Reality Testing
- Flexibility
- Problem Solving
- Stress Tolerance
- Impulse Control
- Optimism
- Happiness

Institutional Programmatic Interventions

- Student recruitment
- New student orientation programs
- Welcome week activities, rituals and traditions
- First-year reading programs
- Academic advising
- Academic support centers
- Early alert programs
- Undergraduate research initiatives
- Learning communities
- First-year seminars

Implications for our work

- Understand our students
- Consider the continually changing culture and students
- Challenge *and* support
- Significant structured reflection
- Powerful communities
- Realize that no single person nor group of people own the first year
- Realize that student learning and success is everyone's business
- Avoid working in silos – accept that the FY is a campus-wide connecting force

Major themes and foundations for excellence (www.fyfoundations.org)

- Intentional and proactive
- Based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year
- Comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated
- Consistent with institutional mission
- High priority for the faculty
- Involves student affairs professionals
- Serve *all* first-year students
- Emphasize the whole student
- Engage students, both in and out of the classroom
- Conduct assessment to achieve ongoing improvement

What still needs to be done? What must we do?

- Seriously address the continuing unacceptable levels of student attrition
- Focus more on student learning and success than on retention
- Make student learning more central to institutional mission
- Broaden institutional approaches to the first college year
- Develop partnerships and collaborative efforts across campus and in systems
- Culturally and institutionally define student success

What still needs to be done? What must we do? (continued)

- Bring students into the conversation
- Enhance faculty development initiatives
- Consider the whole student in enrollment management efforts
- Bring our teaching into the 21st century
- Question traditions and institutional culture in light of student success factors
- Think globally and act locally – the power of one

Implications for Financial Literacy Initiatives

- Partner with existing programs
- Raise awareness across a broad cross-section of campus
- Provide data and research results
- Create a task force or standing committee
 - financial aid, scholarship, retention, student success, alumni
- Advocate for student success initiatives
- Other ideas???

Who will do it?

- You will, I will, we will.

Resources for Institutional Initiatives and Student Success in the First Year

Carey, S. J. (Ed.) Successful Transitions to College Through First-Year Programs, *Peer Review*, Summer 2006, Vol 8 (3). Washington: AAC&U.

Upcraft, M.L., Gardner, J.N., Barefoot, B.O., eds. 2005. *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student: A Handbook for Improving the First Year of College*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

www.sc.edu/fye The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition supports and advances efforts to improve student learning and the transition into higher education through its conferences, institutes, publications, web resources, and research.

www.firstyear.org The Policy Center on the First Year of College engages postsecondary institutions in a model for voluntary, comprehensive self-study and development and implementation of an intentional action plan designed to enhance the effectiveness of the first year.

<http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm> The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is designed to obtain, on an annual basis, information from scores of colleges and universities nationwide about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development.

www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA is a center for research, evaluation, information, policy studies, and research training in postsecondary education. It is home of a 40-year old longitudinal study of freshman characteristics and behaviors.

www.ed.psu.edu/cshe The Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State conducts theory-based research that informs efforts to improve higher education policy and practice.

References and Resources on Emotional Intelligence

BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory: A Measure of Emotional Intelligence. Multi- Health Systems. www.mhs.com

Goleman, D., 1995. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ*. New York, Bantam.

Hughes, M, Patterson, L.B., and Terrell, J. B. *Emotional Intelligence in Action*, 2005. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Parker, J.D.A., Duffy, J., Wood, L.M., Bond, B.J. & Hogan, M. J. Academic Achievement and Emotional Intelligence: Predicting the Successful Transition from High School to University, *Journal of the First-Year Experience*, 2002. Vol. 17 (1), 2005.

Schulman, P. (1995). Explanatory Style and Achievement in School and Work. In G. Buchanan & M.E. P. Seligman (Eds.), *Explanatory style*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Schutte, N.S. & Malouff, J.M. Incorporating Emotional Skills Content in a College Transition Course Enhances Student Retention. *Journal of the First-Year Experience*, 2002. Vol. 14 (1).

Stein, S.J. and Book, H.E., 2000. *The EQ Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Success*. Toronto: Multi-Health Systems, Inc